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Treatment Retention Intervention for Emerging Adults in Outpatient Psychotherapy

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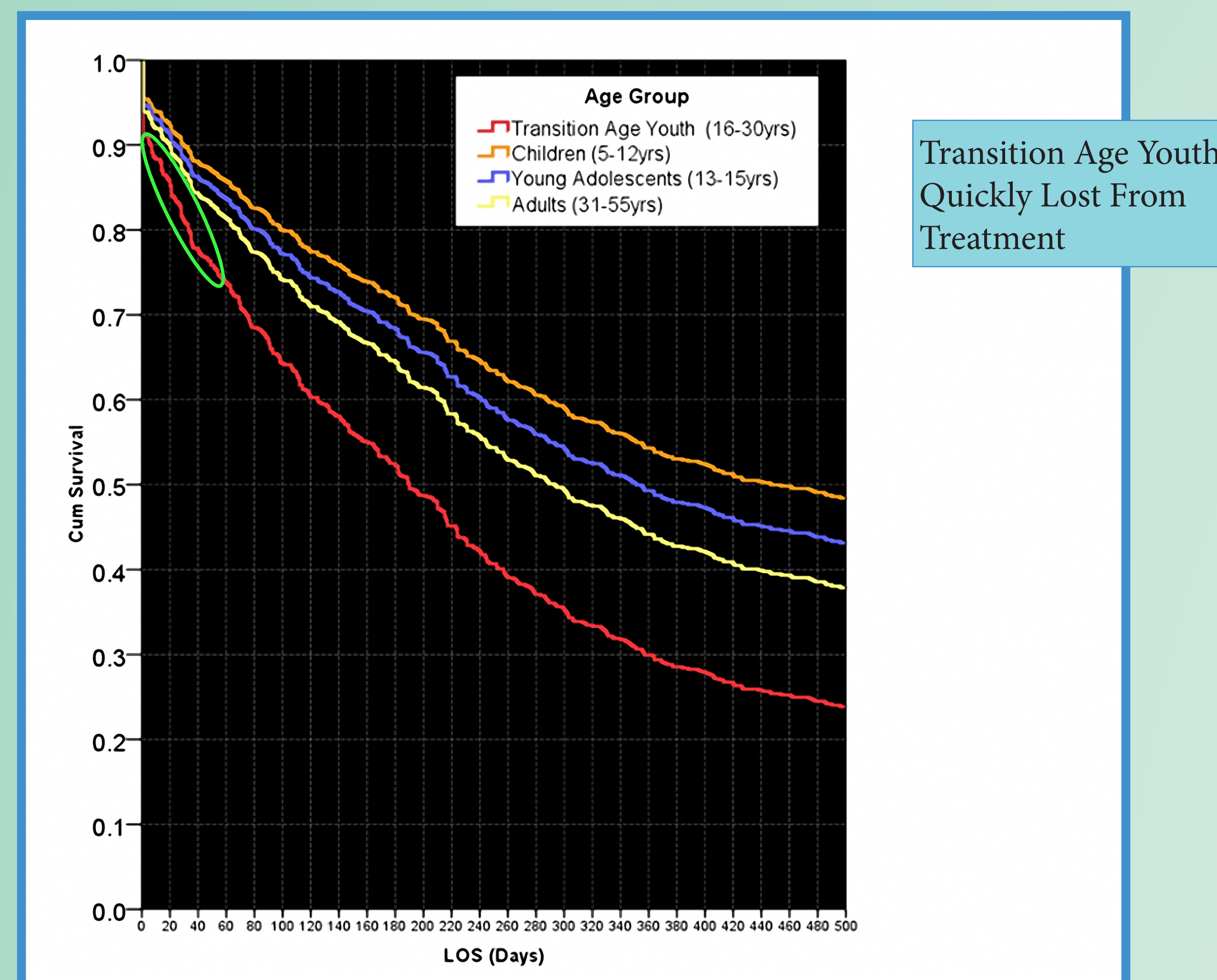
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Emerging Adults (ages 18-25) with serious mental health conditions have poor functioning, yet are more likely to drop out of treatment than older adults.



Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) is a structured brief form of Motivational Interviewing (MI) with demonstrated effectiveness for treatment retention in adults,¹ but has not been used in emerging adults for treatment retention.

¹Hettema, Steele & Miller, 2005



Characteristics of Emerging Adults That May Impede Typical Engagement

- Rejection of authority as part of identity formation
- Irrelevance of the direction of therapy to the actual problems they face
- Less mature goal setting and pursuit.

We developed a manualized MET to be used prior to other treatment (MET-EA) and conducted a randomized trial of the MET compared to usual treatment in a community mental health agency.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) Principles fit with Emerging Adult needs

- R** = resist righting reflex
emerging adults more likely to follow through if they come up with answers
- U** = understand client
open questions, affirmations and reflections support therapeutic alliance with emerging adult
- L** = listen to client
emerging adults fear stigma and being judged; MI emphasizes a non judgmental stance
- E** = empower client
emerging adults tend to reject and challenge authority; MI is a collaboration of partners

Our logic model proposes that the MET improves therapeutic alliance, increases client self-efficacy and normalizes beliefs about therapy via decreasing ambivalence and increasing intention to stay in therapy.

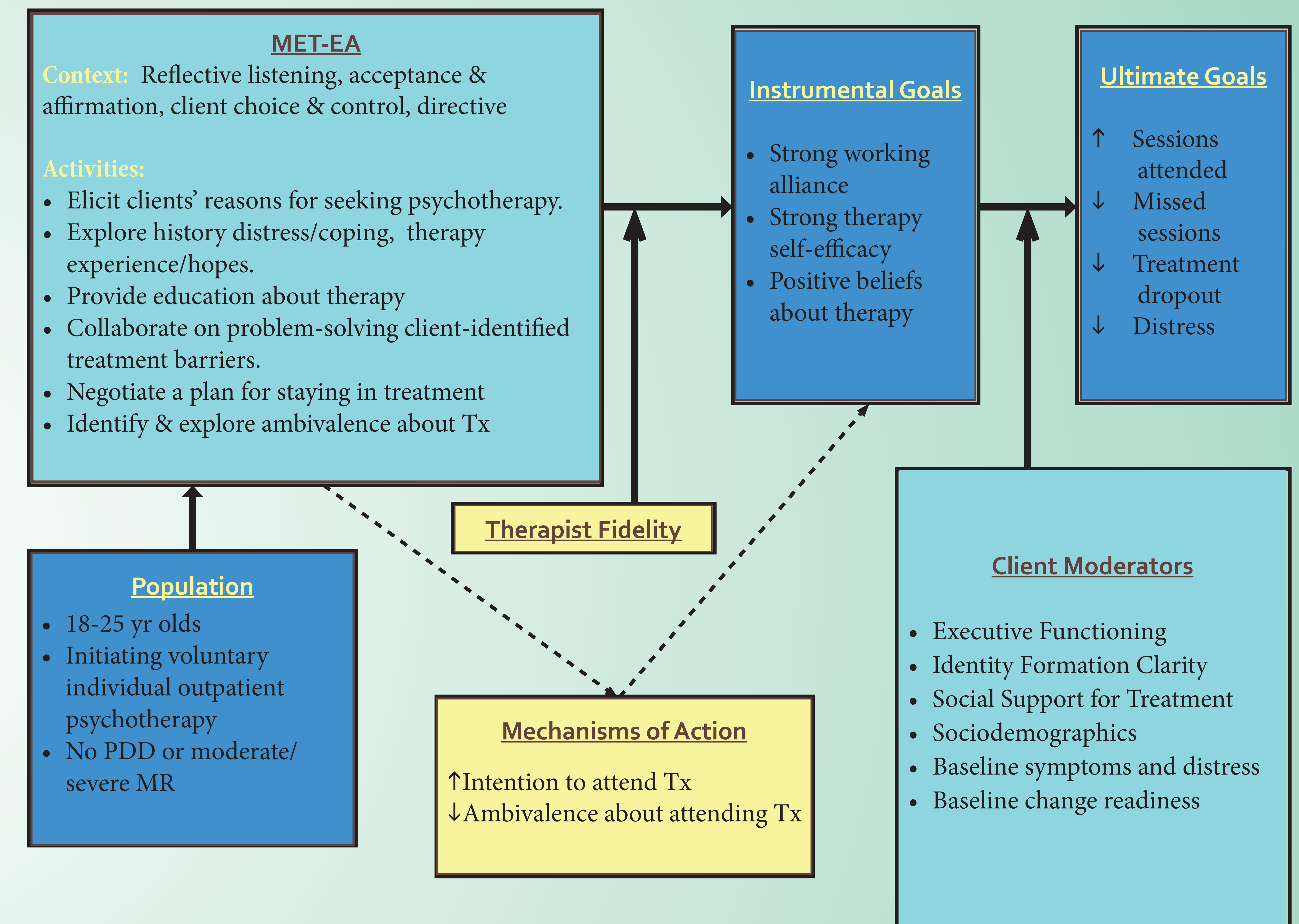


Figure 1. MET-EA Logic Model

*Tx=therapy

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